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THE
FOUNDRY BUDGET
OPENED;
OR, THE
ARCANUM OF WESLEYANISM
DISCLOSED.

"And the Bramble said unto the Trees, If in truth ye anoint me King over you, then come and put your trust in my Shadow."—Judges ix. 15.

"A Man so various, that he seem'd to be,
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was every thing by starts, but nothing long."

Dryden Abs. and Ach.

By **JOHN MACGOWAN.**

LONDON:

Republished by Request.

SOLD BY L. J. HIGHAM, 54, CHISWELL STREET;
GEORGE, BRICK LANE, SPITALFIELDS; AND AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL,
THREE COLT STREET, LIMEHOUSE.

MDCCCXXI.

[PRICE NINEPENCE.]

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PRINTED BY E. JUSTINS AND SON,
BRICK LANE, SPITALFIELDS.

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THE
FOUNDRY BUDGET OPENED.

REVEREND GENTLEMEN,

ANY apology* for your having freely animadverted on Elisha Coles' Practical Treatise on God's Sovereignty, seems to have been entirely needless on your part, as it has been the wonder of sensible thinking people, time out of mind, that a book so calculated to abase the pride of man, and exalt the Redeemer's person and grace, should have been suffered to circulate in the christian world, near the space of an hundred years, without any attempt made by the self-sufficient children of pride, votaries for Free-will, to stifle its influence so detrimental to their cause; especially as we have now, and have had for some years back, so many Popish emissaries amongst us, in one disguise or other, as is very apparent from their doctrine. If a man is firmly attached to the Italian scheme of Universal Redemption and Free-will, it is not possible in the nature of things, but he must find himself very sensibly affected, as you yourselves are, at seeing a book so dangerous to the interests of pride and Rome, to have reached no less than the fourteenth edition.† A circumstance sufficient to alarm every gentleman on your side of the question, especially when it is

* Mr. Sellon, in his preface to his most absurd Treatise on God's Sovereignty, makes a long and senseless apology.

N. B. This Treatise is sold at Mr. Wesley's Tabernacle.

† A circumstance observed with grief in Mr. Sellon's preface, p. 9.

considered, that by a moderate computation, there may have been spread abroad forty-two thousand copies, allowing only three thousand to every impression.

To those that have *weak hands, fearful hearts, and feeble knees*, it is a most acceptable performance; and for that very reason, must needs be highly offensive to people of the opposite character, as the gospel of life itself is, you know, to one kind of men the savour of *death unto death*, even when it is the savour of life and the power of God to the salvation of the lost and perishing sinner. The humbled publican will undoubtedly be satisfied with a free salvation, merely by sovereign mercy; but such a scheme will always be a stumbling-block to the respectable pharisee, who can, either of himself, or by foreign assistance, will, and do to his own satisfaction. I had certainly been on your side of the question myself to this hour, if it had not pleased God to lead me into myself, to behold my wretched sinfulness, and incapacity to do that which is good in his sight: but you will forgive me if I say, that I must lose sight of my total depravity, before your reasoning is likely to have any weight at all upon my mind. Nevertheless, your Treatise will be very likely to produce the effects desired among your own people; as, after your usual manner, you will naturally enough encourage their perusal of it, and discourage, blacken, and vilify as much as possible, whatever may happen to be wrote in defence of Elisha Coles. Those ministers whose single aim is the promulgation of truth, and the advancement of Bible religion, may indeed have no objection to their people making themselves acquainted with the utmost strength of the enemies' arguments; but if gentlemen have got any particular human cause, especially a cause that may not be named, to serve, it behoves them to do what they can to stop the springs of free inquiry. For, as the popish fathers are used to say, "Whilst people are ignorant, they are devout." Or, as the Reverend Mr. Wesley, more agreeably to modern English ears, hath ingeniously rendered it, — "Whilst people are ignorant, they are tractable." This is an happy change of the sentence, as by changing *devout* into *tractable* the sense of the Italian fathers is retained in such a manner that alarms none but the intelligent. By devotion among the Papists,

nothing more is intended than an implicit submission to the directions of the priests; and it will appear upon due inquiry, that tractableness among Mr. Wesley's people means exactly the same.

To be sure, to some people, it will appear, as you seem to apprehend in your preface, somewhat queer, to write against a man after he has been dead near an hundred years. But let people have thought what they would, I wonder you should have sheltered yourselves under Mr. Toplady's shadow, whom you have so very charitably charged with blasphemy.* However, it does not appear that there is a perfect similarity, between his having translated Jerome Zanchy, and your having wrote against the dead Elisha Coles. Mr. Toplady has raised Zanchy from the grave of obscurity and darkness, and brought him forth to the field of usefulness in the Protestant cause; and whatever thanks he receives for his labours from true British Protestants, it was very natural to expect that every friend to the Church of Rome would take the alarm, at seeing such a formidable enemy to that anti-christian hierarchy raised from the dead. His translation of Zanchy was, therefore, from a real friendship to his doctrine, and a love to the Protestant cause. But you have ransacked the grave of Elisha Coles to bring him forth to be convicted of absurdity, error, and blasphemy: just as the worthy doctors of Constance served the doctrines of John Wickliffe. Whether you would serve Elisha's bones precisely in the same manner as they did his, you yourselves are the most competent judges.

A certain writer tells us, that "a living dog is better than a

* The worthy gentleman to whom this letter is addressed, did not only persecute the late Mr. Toplady during his life, but even bespattered his death-bed with abominable falsehood. It was given out in most of Mr. Wesley's societies, both far and near, that the worthy man had recanted and disowned the doctrines of Sovereign Grace, which obliged him, though struggling with death, to appear in the pulpit, emaciated as he was, and openly avow the doctrines he had preached as the sole support of his departing spirit. Wretched must that cause be, which has need to be supported by such unmanly shifts, and seek for shelter under such disingenuous subterfuges. O! Mr. Wesley, answer for this conduct at the bar of the Supreme! Judge yourself, and you shall not be judged. Dare you also to persuade your followers that Mr. Toplady actually died in despair? Fie upon sanctified slander! Fie! Fie!

dead lion ;” yet I assure you, that I would much rather encounter two dead lions than one living dog ; and must, therefore, instead of blaming you for writing against Elisha Coles, now reduced to dust, admire your prudence in passing by Dr. Gill’s writings, and the writings of many others who are still alive, and boldly making your attack where there was an appearance of safety ; I say prudence, and that too the result of much pain, for the Rev. Mr. Wesley has too sensibly felt the weight of Dr. Gill’s* polemic arm, ever to enter into a fair dispute with him, till he is secured in the grave like Elisha Coles, as is clear from the paltry jesuitical pamphlets by him dispersed, to support his credit among his own blinded followers.

I am told that Elisha Coles, your dead antagonist, in his life-time, was a man who made no profession to that perfection which Cardinal Bellarmine, the jesuit, and other Papists, as well as the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, assert to be attainable in this life ; and therefore I expect, that on a close perusal, I shall find some words, if not sentences, which may evidently bear the tokens of a fallible pen, and which I shall excuse myself from vindicating. But the doctrine itself which he aims to establish, shall be the object of my defence. And I hope to defend the doctrines of sovereign grace, without attempting to make the world believe that Arius, Pelagius, and Arminius died strict Calvinists ; or that I have the least hope of either Mr. Wesley or Mr. Sellon forsaking the doctrine of the church of Rome. You did well not to quote your authorities for Calvin, Usher, Pearce, and Mr. Toplady having come over to the universal scheme, and dying in the belief of universal redemption ; but sure it must be a wretched religion that requires means so ignoble for its support. Truth and uprightness alone are requisite to support the Protestant religion !

As I have taken the liberty to consider the Rev. Mr.

* Dr. Gill was alive when this was written ; the author being prevented by a long illness from prosecuting a much larger design, is the true reason why this, and a full defence of that excellent treatise on God’s Sovereignty, by Elisha Coles, has not before now been presented to the world. But now, Gentlemen, Dr. Gill is dead ; I saw him buried, therefore you may freely write against him, for he cannot reply, consequently you are sure of having the field to yourselves.

Wesley, and the Rev. Mr. Sellon, in the same point of view with the Popish doctors ; and as this liberty may, to some reader who has not taken equal pains to inform himself in the springs of their doctrine that I have done, appear to be harsh and severe, it may not be amiss for me here to assign my reason for so doing.

I have then but one reason to assign ; and that is, I find a perfect harmony between their doctrines and the writings of the Popish authors in every article handled in Coles' Treatise on God's Sovereignty ; of which I purpose giving numerous instances in the following letters. And if I prove that Mr. Wesley's doctrine is the very same with that of Rome, I hope that some who have talents and opportunity, will inquire how near akin his practice may be to that of the hoary high priest of the world. This remarkable unity of Mr. Wesley's and Mr. Sellon's doctrine with that of the Papists, accounts for the grave of Mr. Coles having been so belaboured, as we find it in the pretended Defence of God's Sovereignty : an unity which many have been aware of, and which, from an ill-judged tenderness for religion, has hitherto been too much connived at. But surely, the true religion of Jesus will never suffer loss by making Popery manifest wherever it exists !

Who they are that consider the reply to Mr. Hervey's Eleven Letters to Mr. Wesley as keen and satirical, I do not know ; but their opinion differs exceedingly from mine, unless sophistry is understood for keenness, and ill-nature for satire ; but that in these Eleven Letters Mr. Hervey has poured all manner of abuse, as you say he has done, on Mr. Wesley, will not be believed by any who has read them without prejudice. If he had so done, you yourselves have deemed such an example not unworthy of imitation, as is apparent from your application of the lines quoted from Hudibras.* Surely,

* " That saints may do the same thing by
The Spirit in sincerity,
Which other men are tempted to,
And at the devil's instance do—
And yet that thing that's pious in
The one, in t'other is a sin."

So charitable am I, that I verily believe Butler's Hudibras is better understood by Mr. Sellon than the Bible, or any writing dependent thereupon.

you are not so very fond of your own privileges, Gentlemen, as to suppose that the exclusive right of dispensing raillery and abuse instead of argument, is only with you and your good friends at Rome. What harm would there be if a prophet of God should a little taunt the ministers of Baal, and if a Protestant in heart should take off the disguise by which a Papist may happen to be covered, seeing it would certainly be to the advantage of religion, were the sheep's clothing taken off from the back of every ravening *wolf* who has assumed it?

The reason why I address myself to Mr. Wesley as well as Mr. Sellon is, because they stand in the same relation to each other that subsisted between Simeon and Levi; the work being supposed the mutual production of both their pens; and although Mr. Wesley should find it convenient to deny his having any hand in the writing of it, he is well known to be the publisher, the book being sold at the *Foundry*. Were I therefore to understand, and use it as Mr. Wesley's own performance, I should be justified in so doing by the laws of our country, which consider the publisher as standing on the author's pedestals. I do not know but I should indeed have taken Mr. Wesley for the sole author, as well as seller of this performance, had I not at first deemed him more of a gentleman, than to descend to such low, vulgar, and illiberal abuse of the objects of the author's resentment, as is fitted only for the meridian of Rag-fair, or the more famous Billingsgate. But as for craft and cunning sophistry, instead of sound and fair reasoning, I will match the Rev. Mr. John Wesley against any man that ever stained paper with pollution. I am therefore willing to place to that gentleman's account all that wisdom discovered in shifting off argument, and blunting the edge of truth; and allow the Rev. Mr. Sellon the honour of all the illiberal and abusive language used in the performance.

The extensive dominions of the British king could produce but few men who would pretend to answer all that Dr. Gill has written in defence of Predestination, and the final perseverance of the saints, within the short extent of a single hymn, besides "J. Wesley, A.M. sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford!" And yet it passes among your people as a full and complete answer to the Doctor's writings, which

are represented to them as dangerous to peruse. It was the custom of our divines formerly, when Popery spread her sable curtains over all the nation, to forbid the use of the Bible, as well as the writings of J. Wickliffe, and other reformers, for the very same reason, "It was dangerous to read them." And without all doubt the Popish gentry were in the right; for whatever advantage the reader might have obtained by the perusal of them, they were very dangerous to the church, by which the interests of the clergy were then called. Mr. Wesley is equally justifiable in prohibiting* the use of Calvinistical books among his societies; seeing, although the knowledge of error can never affect the stability of truth, yet were his people encouraged to a freedom of inquiry, and exhorted to search for themselves, it might greatly endanger his own authority, and tend to invalidate his hitherto almost, if not altogether, infallible *ipse dixit*. I give it therefore as my cordial advice, that so long as Mr. Wesley wishes to have the direction of his people's consciences in his own hand, that he will continue to stop up the springs of inquiry, by prohibiting the reading of all authors upon the side of Particular Redemption.

I beg, Gentlemen, that you will rightly understand me here. I do not mean that you shall in so many words expressly command them, under pain of excommunication from your societies, not to touch any Calvinistical book, whether ancient or modern; no, I assure you I mean no such thing; for such a command might be dangerous to your interests, and have a tendency to unmask your designs. But there are other methods less dangerous and as effectual which may be taken. For instance, you may as heretofore, represent Goodwin, Owen, Erskine, and all former Calvinistical (or as Mr. Sellon calls them, "Calvinian writers,") as Antinomians; for that is a name that will terribly frighten your people, and effectually answer your designs.† And as

* "In prohibiting," &c. Let every preacher recommend to every society, and that frequently and earnestly, the reading the books we have published preferable to any other."—*Min. of Conf.* p. 17.

"Read partly the Scripture with my notes, partly the close Practical Tract which we have published in prose and verse."—p. 20.

† This is precisely the method which has been used in Mr. Wesley's connection these forty years, and it answers to admiration, for there is not one of an

to modern writers, you have an expedient ready at hand; you have nothing to do but this, when you find yourself overmatched in argument, which, alas! frequently happens, you may represent the author as writing in a bad, angry, and unsanctified spirit, unbecoming the meekness of a christian; and if you know any foible of his, it will be much for your advantage to make it as public as you can; and surely it can be but a venial sin, to slander our neighbour in our own personal defence; and what many people as perfect as you are, have thought very needful to do for the glory of God, and the good of the cause. And besides this, slander will sink twice as deep from lips so much venerated, as it would from any pair of lips whatever in less estimation for sanctity. To read in a book that comes abroad under the *imprimatur* of the Principal of the Foundry, that the late amiable and meek Mr. Hervey should have left the native sweetness of his disposition behind him, and poured all manner of abuse, as Mr. Sellon witnesseth, upon the Rev. Mr. Wesley, must no doubt produce very salutary effects upon your people, and fix an indelible enmity in them against his "Eleven Letters," as well as his "Theron and Aspasio." But why should I attempt to carry coals to Newcastle, or teach the Rev. Mr. Wesley how to invalidate the authority of authors of a different persuasion, seeing such a length of practice must by this time have brought him very near to perfection?

Indeed, I have myself, on reading penny replies to six or nine shilling books, and full answers that never entered into the controversy, been led to admire the wonderful command

hundred of his followers who know what an Antinomian is; wherefore it is generally understood to be some kind of an Hydræan monster, more to be guarded against than even damnation itself, as appears from the declarations of some of their preachers. What would my reader think, if he heard a man declare from the pulpit, "*That he would rather be in hell with devils and damned spirits, than in heaven with God, on supposition that he is capable of giving grace to one and not to another?*" Would he not conclude that hell is not so dreadful as the doctrine of Predestination, which Mr. Wesley calls Antinomianism, is thought to be? Lest my charging Mr. Wesley's followers with ignorance should be thought too harsh, please to take his own words: "Many of our people are as ignorant as if they had never heard the gospel, they know not whether Christ be God or man."—*Min. of Conference*, p. 10.

which you had obtained over your own conscience, especially as it proves such a heavy clog to some people, and prevents them doing their neighbours that injury to which galled pride might stimulate. For my own part, as I have no mercy to expect at your hands, and never intend to accept your offered grace, I shall even, in a good-natured way, sign you a license to represent me as bad as you will, only subjecting you to one restraint. Now, if this is not generosity, surely, Gentlemen, you never met with it in all your peregrinations.

I. Then you may call me a Pagan; for so I am in your sense of Christianity; and I am determined never to believe in a Saviour, whose blood and righteousness are not sufficient of themselves to save those for whom they are provided, without the co-operation of the creature; a Saviour who is notable to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.

II. You may call me an Atheist; for so I am, according to your notions of the Deity; and I am determined never to believe in a God who can have thoughts of love to me for my faith to-day, and thoughts of hatred to me for my sins to-morrow. If I cannot find a God who is of one mind and cannot be turned, the thoughts of whose heart are invariable as his nature, even to the latest generation, I shall certainly die an incorrigible Atheist.

III. But you must not call me a Papist; for I am determined never to be of that communion where the springs of knowledge are shut up, and where freedom of inquiry is denied me. No, I assure you, Gentlemen, I am too proud to submit to let others think for me, and be bound implicitly to believe my teachers, whilst I labour under the conceit of being myself possessed of an immortal spirit capable of reflection; and which, if they should happen to lead into a ditch, might find it very difficult to get out again without damage. To persuade me, that believing as my teachers would have me is the true faith of the gospel, or that there is much advantage arises from ignorance, must be a work of great labour and time, therefore I will not be a Papist; and of course, Gentlemen, I shall not choose to sit under your ministrations because of their Italian extraction.

I am very much displeased at the Rev. Mr. Sellon's having charged the Papists with being as red-hot Predestinarians as

he deems Mr. Toplady to be, and for proof adducing the doctrine of Austin, as well as that of Thomas Aquinat. Before that Austin is acknowledged to have been a Papist, it may not be amiss for you, Gentlemen, from your great knowledge of ecclesiastical history, to show that there actually were Papists, according to the modern acceptation of that appellation, as early as the fifth century, otherwise Austin's having been a Predestinarian will not prove Mr. Toplady to be a Papist. But if it should so happen that Mr. Toplady, Elisha Coles, &c. are of the same sentiments with the doctors in primitive times, I hope to prove, that you yourselves have the honor of ranking with the Romish gentry of a later date, when Popery became anti-christianism indeed, I mean with Bellarmine, Hemengius, the Annotators of Rheimes, and the Doway Divines; and that too, not in any particular point of doctrine, but in every general article insisted on by Mr. Elisha Coles; so that if Elisha Coles, Dr. Gill, Mr. Hervey, and Mr. Toplady felicitate themselves on the countenance given them by all the reformers, and all the confessions of reformed churches everywhere, you are no less happy in being patronised by names, at this day the most respectable in the annals of Italy.

The work indeed is very laborious, and what, perhaps, none but myself would venture to undertake; and what I should not venture upon, were it not that the state of the case seems now to call for every man being classed with his own proper company. We shall therefore, however laborious, bring the matter to a fair issue, by seeing whether the honor of ranking with Papists of respectable name, is due to yourselves, or to the Predestinarians, as you are pleased, in the depth of your humility, reproachfully to style all who believe in salvation by Christ alone, without any spiritual co-operation of the creature.

One instance only I beg leave to trouble you with in this letter, in which the most beautiful harmony between you and the Popish evangelists subsists relative to the cause of election. Mr. Sellon gives us a clear and summary view of the case* in the following words:

* Sellon against Coles, p. 41.

If I had not known the intimate connexion subsisting between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Mr. Sellon, I should have thought that the latter had waggishly and

" God determines to choose *some* of the fallen race to
 " eternal life. Such was his pleasure. And to choose them
 " upon such terms as were agreeable to his holiness, wisdom,
 " justice, and mercy in conjunction. Here is his good plea-
 " sure still. And these terms shall be, repentance towards
 " God, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and obedience
 " springing from that faith. Still his good pleasure. And
 " every one that complies with these terms shall have eternal
 " life. This too is his good pleasure: and to all this there is
 " nothing casual, contributory, or motive out of himself. It
 " is all of Free Grace. Well then, to go one step farther.
 " JOHN, for instance (I suppose John Wesley is intended),
 " John will repent, believe, and obey; therefore God elects
 " John to eternal life. Now, although John's repentance,
 " faith, and obedience be the reason why he is elected, yet it
 " is no cause (unless it be *sine qua non*, which has nothing
 " to do with efficiency) contribution, or motive to his election
 " upon those terms. These acts of John did not *cause*, did
 " not *assist*, did not *move* God to choose some of the fallen
 " race, nor to choose them upon certain terms; nor to fix
 " these terms as they are; nor to make complying with these
 " terms the condition of his obtaining eternal life: much

wickedly, not having the fear of God before his eyes, held up the former on the
 shaft of ridicule, to be hissed at by the many-mouthed multitude. But seeing
 I cannot consider it as intended for ridicule, I am obliged to conclude, that it
 was the utmost exertion of grateful friendship, to set forth the praises of the
 man who had saved him from everlasting perdition, and from the far greater
 evil of being carried away by a belief in the doctrine of absolute Predestination.

Let no man account me profane for ascribing the power of saving sinners to
 the Rev. Mr. Wesley, seeing, that for so doing, I have his own authority.
Min. of Con. p. 19. Rule xi. he says thus to his preachers, " Do not mend your
 " rules, but keep them.—You have nothing to do but to save souls." Surely
 it would be absurd in the highest degree, to suppose that his preachers, the
 very underlings among his helpers, can save souls, and he himself be destitute
 of a saving power. Farther, to convince the reader that Mr. Wesley does not
 consider himself in that diminutive light, attend to his modest directions given
 to the said saving helpers, *Min. of Confer. p. 20. Rule xii.* " Act in all things
 " not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it is
 " your part to employ your time in the manner which WE direct (it is not as
 " Christ directs.) Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is
 " needful that you should do that part of the work which WE advise, at those
 " times and places which WE judge most for his glory." Then follow the
 directions by which they are to save sinners, too large to be inserted here.

“less was John’s repentance, faith, and obedience the cause
 “of his repenting, believing, and obeying, and thereupon of
 “his being chosen to eternal life. Hence it is plain, that
 “God may choose men to eternal life upon the foresight of
 “their *faith and works*, and still it shall be according to his
 “own good pleasure, and the whole of man’s salvation mat-
 “ter of free grace, especially *as God works in him to will*
 “*and to do.*”

This long paragraph which I have industriously quoted, is far from being without some symptoms of its being the production of a fallible pen, as want of grammar and syntax are the least of its blemishes. Before I produce authorities for its leading design, I shall beg leave to offer a thought or two of my own upon it.

1. As God hath fixed certain terms, such as repentance, faith, and obedience, as conditions on which only he will choose men to salvation and eternal life, and that every man by fulfilling these conditions or terms may have eternal life; you do wrong in talking of his choosing some only upon these conditions, seeing he certainly chose all if they would but do as John does, by believing, repenting, and obeying. This brings to my mind a saying of the famous jesuit, Cardinal Bellarmine, in his treatise *de Gratia*, “On God’s behalf,” says that learned disputant, “like effectual grace
 “is given to all men, but the free will of man maketh the
 “difference, whereby believing makes the grace of God more
 “effectual.”

Here the Cardinal expresses your meaning in a plain compendious manner, and evidently shews us, that if God has fixed certain conditions, on which alone he will choose men to eternal life, that it must be the free will of man that makes the difference between one and another. So that, according to Bellarmine, your proposition, “That every one who com-
 “plies with the terms appointed by God shall have eternal
 “life,” is strictly orthodox at Rome.*

* God did decree from the beginning, to elect, or choose in Christ, all that should believe in Christ to salvation; and this decree proceeds from his own goodness, and is not built upon any goodness in the creature. I think, absolute and unconditional election and reprobation cannot be found in holy writ.—*Wesley’s Dialogue between a Predestinarian and his Friend.*

That all the ways of the Most High must be agreeable to his wisdom, justice, holiness, and mercy, is a point incontrovertible ; but it is not so clear, that to have founded the decree of Election, upon a foundation so precarious and uncertain, as man's willing, repenting, believing, and obeying, would have been so highly becoming unerring Wisdom ! For what if none might have proved so tractable as John did : and none had repented, believed, and obeyed ? then all the designs of mercy might have been frustrated, heaven continued empty, the mansions of glory untenanted ; the whole of revelation might have been given in vain, and the blood of Christ might have been altogether useless with respect to man's salvation. If all men stood in the divine purpose on a level with John, and there was a possibility that John might not have repented, believed, and obeyed, the same possibility of non-compliance equally affected the whole, and every individual of the human race ; so that there was a possibility that not one of the children of Adam should ever finally receive mercy !

If John had seen meet, or if he should yet see meet (for although an old man he is still alive) to forsake his repentance, faith, and obedience, so that the grace of God should prove, after all his past goodness, to have been given him in vain ; and that although now a perfect man, the said John (Wesley) should yet become a castaway and be finally damned, God's having chosen him on *account of his faith and works*, will yield him no very comfortable reflections in

Hemengius, one of the most zealous Popish writers against the Reformation, hath the following sentence expressive of the very quintessence of Mr. Wesley's doctrine : " We do not believe because we are foreseen and elected, but because " we believe we were foreseen and elected to life." Again, says the same writer, " God hath chosen those whom he foresaw would believe in Christ."

Snecanus, another learned disputant of the Roman church against the Reformation says : " If so that God preferreth some because of their faith, and " rejecteth others because of their unbelief, there is no unrighteousness with " God, because the cause of the difference in God's election is apparent, namely, " the respect to their faith."

From these and many other testimonies which might be adduced, it is clear even to a demonstration, that the doctrine preached at Rome is identically the same with that of the Foundry, and of the rest of Mr. Wesley's societies in Great Britain and Ireland.

the regions of despair. And why may not John,* with all his present repentance, faith, and obedience, fall away and perish as well as another? Now, if John may fall from grace; and if all men have an equal power with him to stand or fall; to improve, or to neglect and abuse the grace of God, then may all fall, become castaways, and perish eternally, so that not one of the race of mankind, however justified, sanctified, and perfected in love, at some certain period, should ever hold out to the end and be saved.

Then might the devil have triumphed over a disappointed God; Christ might have beheld all the travail of his soul in hell, which would have yielded him but little satisfaction, and elect angels might have sung *that mercy* by which all *might have been saved* if they would; but which indeed has left them all to perish, because they would not fulfil its conditions.

I should rather suppose, that it is more becoming the perfections of Deity, to establish his council in such a manner as utterly to preclude any future disappointment. For instance, when God proclaims his great name: "The Lord, "the Lord God, merciful and gracious," &c. that he should have made provision, that the designs of his mercy should not be frustrated by any future intervention of sin. When he prepared mansions in his heavenly kingdom, that he should have ascertained their possessors, and not have left their occupation, or standing void, to the uncertain choice of ever-changing man; for all are not so immutable as the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

This repentance, faith, and obedience, are fixed as the terms of election you tell us; and yet you immediately add, that after all there is nothing casual, contributory, or motive out of himself (*i. e.* God), it is all of grace. Why should Messrs. Wesley and Sellon depart so far from the rules of

* Some of this gentleman's female hearers, have whispered their suspicions to one another that their venerable leader is not wholly made up of spirit, and even have expressed a fear, lest this holy man should be found on examination, to have some appendages of the flesh cleaving to him; but I hope their fears are groundless. That sister in ———— should not blow the head of a party, lest the party itself should suffer.

common sense and grammar, as to talk of Free-grace, when in fact nothing but meritorious works are intended. Supposing now, Messieurs, that we were, for the sake of argument, to grant, which yet must not be allowed as truth, that God fixed those general terms of his election, and that there was no motive out of himself to move him to this, what is that to *John* or *me*? We are not to stand or fall by general rules, but by particular applications, or the reverse. Shall I ask the reverend and very powerful authors, if John's *repentance* was in God, or in himself; if John believed, or if God believed for him; if John obeyed, or if John's obedience was all in God himself? For we are told by the same dictatorial pen on the one hand, "That John is chosen to eternal life upon his repentance, faith, and obedience;" and on the other, we are told, that "there is nothing casual, contributory, or motive (for John's election) out of God himself. It is all of Free-grace. And yet God would not have chosen John, if John would not have repented, believed, and obeyed." Whether God shewed more grace, or John of a tractable spirit, may to some appear difficult to determine, but to me the odds are very much on John's side of the question; for it is beyond a doubt, that God's election would have come to nothing in respect to John, if honest John had not been good enough to confirm God's decree with respect to himself, by his own repentance, faith, and obedience.

"John, for instance, will repent, believe, and obey; therefore John is chosen to eternal life." Far be it from me to question John's devotion and tractability; for I firmly believe, that no clerk in Great Britain has been more exact in tithing annise, mint, and cummin,* than he hath been. To show

* *Annise, mint, and cummin.* Without inquiring whether Mr. Wesley does or does not neglect the weightier matters of the law, it may not be improper to show that he deals large in the smaller commodities, after very ancient example. A few instances will be sufficient, as they are all taken with precision from his own pen, in his Minutes of Conference, and his BAND RULES.

The following are some of Mr. Wesley's Band Rules to be strictly observed by every member.

I.—"To taste no spirituous liquor, no dram of any kind unless prescribed by a physician." So that on an attack of a flatulent cholic, a person must see a doctor in order to be allowed a glass of brandy.

you that I am sincere, I shall set before you a summary view of John's works of merit. He hath not only repented and believed his own way, but he hath obeyed by fasting. John is given to fasting* and mortification, therefore he is a rare

II.—“To pawn nothing, no not to save life.” So that a person having ever so many things which he does not immediately stand in need of, must perish with hunger, rather than part with any of them to obtain a present supply.

III.—“To wear no needless ornaments, such as rings, earrings, necklaces, lace, or ruffles.” This rule speaks for itself.

IV.—“To use no needless self-indulgence, such as taking snuff and tobacco, unless prescribed by a physician.” So that if you are tractable children, every pipe of tobacco, and every pinch of snuff you are allowed must cost you a guinea.

But alas! this law-giver, to his woful experience, may take that mournful lamentation, Isaiah i. “I have brought up children, and they have rebelled against me;” for at the Conference he asks, p. 16. “Have those in Band left off snuff and drams?” and receives this melancholy answer. “No, many are still enslaved to one or the other.” For the remedying of which, a new law is given, prohibiting the preacher from touching either on any account.

Take now some of the qualifications requisite to be a preacher in Mr. Wesley's connexion.

Questions to be asked of one to be admitted an helper :

“Do you know the rules of the society; of the Bands? Do you keep them?”

“Do you take no snuff? tobacco? drams? Do you constantly attend church and sacrament? Will you preach every morning and evening not lolling upon your elbows? Will you recommend fasting both by precept and example?”—p. 37, 38.

“Do you deny yourselves every useless pleasure of sense, imagination, and honor? Do you use only that kind and degree of food which is best both for the body and soul? Do you eat no flesh suppers? No late suppers? Do you eat only three meals a-day? Do you take no more food than is necessary at a meal? How often do you drink wine or ale?”—p. 33.

Common sense, if appealed to, will declare that there is more real evil in detracting from a man's character whilst living, and belying his dying sentiments after he is dead, than in all the above things so strictly prohibited.

* Much stress appears to be laid on this fasting on Fridays, from its being so warmly pressed upon the preachers in their annual conference: an instance or two I beg leave to lay before my reader. “Do you read the books which we advise, and none other? Do you fast as often as your health will permit, especially on Fridays?”—*Min. of Conf.* p. 30.

“God led us into fasting at Oxford: and he led you all into it when you first set out. How often do you fast now? Every Friday. In what degree?”—p. 31.

“Which of you fasts every Friday in the year? Which of us fasts at all? Does not this show the present temper of our minds (though not of all) to be soft and unnerved? How then can we advance the work of God, though we may preach loud and long enough? Here is the root of the evil; hence, the work of God droops. Few are convinced, few are justified, few of our brethren sanctified. Hence more and more doubt if we are to be sanctified

example of devotion. In 1729, John began to mortify and purify himself by fasting every Friday; so that now for the space of forty-two years, John hath fasted every Friday; and in this current year, has not less than two thousand one hundred and eighty-four Fridays to place to his own credit with the Almighty. For the want of this fasting among his preachers, John tells us, in his Minutes of Conference, 1770, that they are become "soft and unnerved, the work of God droops, few are convinced, few are sanctified, few are justified." So that it would seem that this fasting is indeed the spring of the success of John's ministry. How lamentable must it be, that the preachers cannot deny themselves victuals on Fridays; seeing that by their so doing many may be convinced, justified, and sanctified! But few people, as he tells us himself, will do what he does to save the souls of sinners.

Besides the two thousand one hundred and eighty-four fast days, John has strictly and punctually set apart two hours every day for retirement and private devotions, which amount to fourteen hours every week, which, in the forty-two years that John has been the leader of the flock, amount to no less than thirty-three thousand nine hundred and thirty-six hours of private devotions, besides all other times of occasional retirement, which has been very considerable. Moreover, three unstudied, inspired sermons every day, which is twenty-one a week, and forty-five thousand eight hundred and sixty-four sermons in the space of forty-two years.* Besides his framing of laws for the government of many thousand people whom *he* hath saved. Whether John fasted upon good *fish* on Friday, as his brethren on the Continent are said to do, or actually pinched his belly, I cannot certainly tell; but surely no small dependence may

"till death; I mean sanctified throughout, saved from all sin, perfected in love."—*Ans.* 13.

From all of which it appears that Mr. Wesley's work of saving souls began in fasting upon Fridays; hath been carried on by fasting on Fridays; and must all go to wreck and ruin, unless his preachers will follow his example, and fast upon Fridays.

* N. B. There are the works of eight additional years to be put to the above calculation, which is a very considerable advance in favor of this elect man.

be had upon John's works, if works are, as he tells us, "*the condition of our salvation.*"—*Min. pag. ult.* But what a terrible thing would it be, if after all, John should lose all this perfection, and be damned at last ! which very possibly may be the case, according to his own doctrine.

There are yet other things to be noted in John's favor in a way of negative sanctity. His wife is debarred the use of ruffles, rings, and jewels : he himself takes no snuff or tobacco, drinks no drams or spirituous liquors ; eats no food but what is good both for soul and body, nor drinks he any thing but what promotes his salvation, and fits him for saving others. These are rules laid down, p. 53 of the Minutes, for the observance of the preachers, and which, to be sure, he punctually observes himself.

I have equally as high an opinion of John's importance, as I have of his sanctity ; his own pen bears witness to his importance, and who would reject the testimony of a perfect man ? Says Master John to his preachers at Conference : *
 " What can be done in order to continue this union which
 " now subsists among you ? Indeed, as long as I live, there
 " will be no great difficulty : *I am, under God, the centre of*
 " *union* to all our travelling as well as local preachers. They
 " all know me and my communication. They all love me
 " for my works' sake ; and therefore, were it only out of
 " respect to me, they will continue connected with each
 " other." This is not all ; for the said John, in the ardor
 of his zeal, kindly offered to have become the centre of
 union to all the clergymen of the Church of England, who
 believe and preach salvation by faith ; and that he does not
 stand in the same relation to them, in which he stands to
 his own preachers, is not owing to any modesty or diffidence
 with which he was burdened, but merely to their intractable
 disposition. For says he : " It has been my desire that all
 " these ministers who believe and preach salvation by faith,
 " might cordially agree between themselves, and not hinder,
 " but help one another. After occasionally pressing this in
 " private conversation, wherever I had opportunity, I wrote

* *Min.* p. 53.

“down my thoughts upon this head, and sent them to each
 “in a letter. Out of fifty or sixty to whom I wrote, only
 “three vouchsafed me an answer. So I gave this up. I can
 “do no more. They are a rope of sand, and such they will
 “continue.”*

The advantageous light in which John appears beyond the enlightened clergymen in the Church of England, must be clear to every intelligent reader. John drew, but they would not run. He would have directed them, but they would not obey. He was staunch, but they would not budge an inch out of their own way to follow him. When he drew, he found them a rope of sand, upon which there is no dependence. Now if the reader is desirous of knowing the terms of union with Mr. John in the capacity of preachers, you may take them as follows in his own words:† “The case
 “continued the same when the number of preachers increased. I had just the same power still, to appoint *when*,
 “*where*, and *how* each should help me. And to tell any, if
 “I saw meet, “I do not desire your help any longer.” On
 “these terms, and no other, we joined at first; on these we
 “continue joined. The care of all the preachers, and of
 “all the people lies upon me, and is a burden indeed.”

How ardent must John's zeal be, in comparison of those ropes of sand he complains of, seeing he was even willing to add to the grievous burden of power already cast upon him, the care of no less than fifty or sixty clergymen? And what advantage would it have been to the church, would these clergymen but have given themselves up to his uncontrollable direction, as all the Methodist preachers of his connexion have actually done, to be told *when, where, and how they should preach?*

A farther instance of John's importance, is the absolute dominion he has over the people: “To me,” says he, “the
 “people in general will submit, but they will not submit to
 “any other.”‡ The reason of which we have in the same page, and is his great superiority over all others; for, says he: “If you can tell me of any one, or of any five men, to

* *Min.* p. 53.

† *Min. of Confer.*

‡ *Ibid.* p. 52.

“whom I may transfer this burden, who *can* and *will* do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you.”

To be sure, this does look somewhat like self-exaltation, but it amazingly shows the importance of the man; and it will be inferred, that although God may have chosen John to eternal life, on account of his repentance, faith, and obedience, it is no proof that Walter Sellon, Charles Wesley, and myself, are chosen upon the same terms; seeing we have it under John's own hand, that he can do what five others cannot do with equal propriety. Poor John has a heavier burden to bear than ever was laid upon Paul the apostle; as the one has the care of both preachers and people, but the other speaks of the care of the *churches only*. To show the consistency of an extraordinary step having been taken in John's election, be it remembered, that he esteems himself as an *extraordinary messenger*. “In what view,” says this great man, “may we and our helpers be considered? Perhaps, as *extraordinary messengers*, designed by God to provoke others to jealousy.”* Now, although this has no manner of tendency to discover John's humility, it must needs make the importance of his person manifest. John's helpers or inferior preachers are extraordinary messengers; and yet they are under the direction of assistants, and the assistants themselves are under the sole direction of Master John: how extraordinary must he then be himself! So that upon the whole, Mr. Sellon, your proposition, “that God hath chosen John to eternal life on account of his repentance, faith, and obedience,” is not so wonderful, neither will it answer the desired end, unless you could prove that Charles is also chosen on the same conditions.†

* *Min. of Confer.* p. 18.

† This particular notice which God is said to have taken of John from eternity, on account of his repentance, faith, and obedience, brings to my mind one of Mr. Sellon's contracted sayings: “I defy all the Predestinarians in the world, with all their knowledge of God's decrees, to prove that God mentioned the name of John Calvin, Elisha Coles, or any other person of *their party* from eternity?” Yet two pages after, he tells us of what notice God took of John in his decree; and John tells us himself, that God would have

To a man who can repent, believe, and obey, to be sure nothing can be more desirable than such a scheme as conditional election. But although it is altogether answerable to John's qualities, alas! it will be of little use to those who can neither will nor work; who find not how to perform that which is good, and are indeed insufficient of themselves so much as to think aright. The same scheme of salvation which would be very sufficient for the respectable pharisee, will not by any means reach the case of the poor publican! no: the pharisee can repent, believe, and obey, like John, but the poor publican can do nothing but sin and rebel; so that although salvation by works may do very well for him who has store of obedience, it will leave the poor man who has no power to work, to perish in his imbecility.

But why does not Mr. Sellon and Mr. Wesley cease from speaking about Free-grace, seeing that *works* is the scheme by them adopted? In the Minutes, it is expressly declared that, "salvation is by works as a condition;" and with great authority it is asked, "If good works are not done to procure "the favor of God, what are they done for?" And in the answer to Mr. Coles, we are given to understand, that God would not have chosen even John himself, if John would not have believed, repented, and obeyed. The clear state of the case is concisely laid down by the Rhemish Annotators on Rom. x. 16. "We see then that it is in a man's free will, to believe, or not believe, to obey or disobey the gospel or truth preached." Now as John Wesley, Mr. Sellon, and the Popish divines are in general of opinion that salvation is conditional, and dependeth on our faith and obedience, it is certainly wrong to blind the multitude, by crying out "Free-grace," when in reality our own works are intended. It is a point long since

been unjust if he had not done so. Although no person of the Free-grace party were, as Mr. Sellon charitably supposes, named in the purpose of God, yet he modestly concludes that those of his own party were expressly pointed out by name, like John, (I suppose his modesty would not suffer him to say Walter.) This concession, however, I am free to make, that if the whole party who experimentally believe in absolute election, were actually passed by unnamed, that there never was one of them that charged the Almighty with injustice for his neglect of them, as John would have done, had he been treated in the same manner.—*Pred. Calm. Consid.* p. 18.

decided by the apostle Paul, that if salvation is at all of works, as you assert, it cannot be at all of grace. Either it is of works or grace. You say, it is of works as the condition. I say then, with the holy apostle, "It is no more of grace." Why then, Gentlemen, will you not call things by their own proper names?

I have not the least objection to your obtaining salvation by your own repenting, believing, and obeying, seeing you deem yourselves capable of it; it is your imposing on the public a jumble of works and grace confounded, whilst salvation by works is absolutely inculcated upon the preachers in private conference, which I am offended with. Would you throw off the disguise, and publicly avow salvation by works in plain terms, I should give myself no manner of trouble about confuting you; but if you will talk about grace when works are intended, some pains must be taken to clear up the mistake.

The following sentence is somewhat mysterious, and must be cleared up to satisfaction before it is properly understood: "Although John's repentance, faith, and obedience be the reason why he is elected, yet it is not the cause, (unless it be *sine qua non*, which has nothing to do with efficiency) contribution, or motive to his election upon those terms."

John's repentance, faith, and obedience, is *the reason*, you say, of his election to eternal life, but not the cause, contribution, or motive of his being chosen upon these terms, unless it be *sine qua non*. The precise meaning of which is, if I understand it aright, "God of his own Free-grace decreed to choose all mankind to eternal life, on condition they would repent, believe, and obey." This is the Free-grace you mean; and this, an election without reprobation, a choosing where none are left. John's personal religion is not the cause of this general Election and Free-grace. Is not this your meaning? But his obedience is certainly the cause why *he* is chosen rather than *another* who does not repent, believe, and obey *like him*. So that though JOHN is not important enough to have been the cause of God's decree, he is in fact the cause of his own salvation and acceptance with God, or in other words, of his own election.

You know, you admit that John's repentance, faith, and obedience, is (*sine qua non*) the cause of his personal election, and, of course, of his salvation; as without these he could not have been at all chosen to eternal life. I should be glad if in future you would disuse all scraps of Latin, as they only tend to blind the reader to your leading scope; and speak in a tongue known to the English reader, as better adapted to convey instruction to the vulgar understanding, especially as you and I have not the hope of obtaining many readers of erudition.

The rest of the mystery contained in this paragraph, I shall for the present pass by unnoticed, that I may have room to note its concluding sentence, which in fact undoes the whole system:—"The whole of man's salvation is matter of Free-grace, especially as God works in him to will and do." Fie, fie, Mr. Sellon! after you had built up such a beautiful Babel, why should you have beat it to ruins by such an ill-judged remark? A remark which will strip your friend JOHN of all the glory we have been ascribing to him in the above pages.

John will repent, believe, and obey; but it is God that works in John so to will, and so to do. Alas! what then has John more to boast of than those that are damned? Seeing he had never willed, never obeyed, if God had not wrought in him both the one and the other. If God works in a man *to will*, he certainly *shall* will. If God works in a man *to do*, he certainly *shall* obey. God cannot be said to work in a man *to will*, unless by the divine influence he actually *do will*: nor can he be said to work in a man to obey, unless he actually doth obey. Supposing him to work some motions tending that way, and the said motions by any means be stifled, it can never be said that these workings of God in the heart are both to will and to do, notwithstanding the natural tendency of the motions, seeing they are stifled before we either will or do.

If God works in men both to will and do, he certainly knew from everlasting where he would or would not thus work. Many have neither willed nor done, and therefore are cast out into darkness and perdition; from which one would be led to conclude, that God never intended to work in them

both to will and do ; or it would be difficult to say what should frustrate his intention. In like manner, faith and repentance either are or are not divine gifts ; either the fruits of nature or the fruits of the Spirit ; if the latter, they are not surely at John's command, and can be no causes of his election ; but if the former, the case is quite otherwise.

That faith and repentance are both divine gifts, the scriptures solemnly testify, Eph. ii. 8. Paul assures us, that faith is the gift of God, and not of ourselves ; on which account, it appears to me, that God having given to John that faith which he hath not given to others, is more likely the *fruit* of election, than its spring and cause. It being a gift of God, shows that it is not a fruit of nature ; and God, in whose mind no fresh idea can arise, who with one glance of his all-comprehending eye surveys all the incidents of eternal futurity, must needs have been perfectly acquainted with his own work, and where he designed to bestow the future the saving donation. Therefore, his purpose to bestow faith upon John, or to work in him to repent, believe, and obey, is in all respects equivalent to a decree of absolute election.

Faith is the gift of God in all that it is ; not barely the principle of faith, but its exercise, continuance, and victory. Now, God must needs know with the utmost precision where he would give, and from whom he would withhold the extensive, the comprehensive blessing of believing to salvation ; or, as you express it from our apostle, where he would work in the soul both to will and do, and who he would leave to cease from willing, doing, and obeying. For this willing and doing, which is under the influence of divine operation, cannot easily be fixed to any particular set season or period. If Mr. Wesley or Mr. Sellon have found out precisely the period, will they be pleased to oblige the world with a succinct account of it ; as it may be of the greatest use in exciting the people to take particular notice of, and improve that precious hour of visitation. Or can you, Gentlemen, assign a proper and cogent reason, why continuance of faith, and its victory, should not be the gift of God as well as faith itself ? If you can, now is your time ; if you cannot, we shall certainly conclude, that faith in all that it is, is the gift of

God, and so resolve our perseverance in faith into the absolute sovereign goodness of Him, who works all things after the counsel of his own will.

Once more ; before I conclude this long letter, give me leave to recapitulate what has been said before, that in my opinion, Mr. Sellon, in his " Defence of the Church of England from the charge of Calvinism," was certainly wrong in charging the members of the Church of Rome as being in general Predestinarians, because Austin and Thomas Aquinas, who were of that communion, happened to be of that persuasion. Austin, you know, lived near a thousand years before the Reformation ; and it can scarcely be supposed, that the state of the church should continue precisely the same in point of doctrine from the sixth to the fifteenth century. In Austin's day, the church was pure in comparison of what it was in the days of Luther and Calvin ; and as for the seraphic Doctor, he was a rare instance indeed. But to come at the true state of the doctrine of the Romish Church, we must consult the Rhemish and Doway divines, and Bellarmine the Jesuit, Hemengius, Hubert, Pucksius, and others, who wrote against the Reformers ; then shall we see, that if Austin and Aquinas rank with the modern Predestinarians, you yourselves, Gentlemen, have the honor of being manifested of the class of anti-reformers in point of doctrine, in every head that is handled by Elisha Coles. The task will, perhaps to you, be somewhat unpleasant ; but trial of spirits remains still a christian duty, and may profitably be attended to. May God give success in the present attempt.

I am,

REVEREND GENTLEMEN,

Very respectfully,

Your humble Servant.

LETTER II.

REVEREND GENTLEMEN,

YOU must not mistake me ; for I never imagined that the doctrine of absolute Predestination of the elect to holiness here and glory hereafter, could be grateful to the pride of man : no, Gentlemen, so intractable is human pride, that it will neither lead nor drive, unless it may reap some laurel to its own aspiring brow, by fulfilling the conditions which it hath laid down to itself, or fancies that God has laid down for its performance, in order to procure his favor :* therefore I am not at all surprised to see the sons of antichrist, of every name and every age, militating against a doctrine so subversive of human virtue, and natural religion, so mortifying to the self-righteous devotee, cashiered upon all hands by men of self-estimation. For, as Jesus himself is a Saviour only to sinners, so his religion is suitable only to the ungodly, to the blind and lame, to the halt and maimed, to them who work not, being without strength, and only believe in Him who justifies the ungodly.

To them indeed, and only to them, it is an acceptable saying, that, “whom he predestinated, them he also called ; whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” They find that “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps ;” and therefore, rejoice

* In the whole world of mankind, notwithstanding the numerous sectaries which abound, there are, properly speaking, but two religions ; the religion of Christ and that of antichrist, or of the publican and of the pharisee : and these two religions differ as widely from each other as heaven and hell, and are as striking a contrast as the characters of Christ and the devil. The religion of Jesus consists in a lost and perishing sinner having nothing but wretchedness of his own, coming to an all-sufficient Saviour for pardon, acceptance, and a full salvation, merely on the footing of sovereign grace. On the other hand, the religion of pride or of antichrist, consists in a bringing to God the tithes of annise, mint, and cummin, or its proposed conditions of which it vaunts. This is precisely the difference between Mr. Wesley's religion, and that of Elisha Coles !

that all their goings in the divine life are established by the Lord. They have undergone a painful amputation of the working hand; and from a sense, and only from a sense of their own entire helplessness, are glad to hear of a finished, independent salvation, perfectly adapted to their circumstances. Their principal care is not how the Almighty God will justify himself to man, and vindicate his conduct in judging of the world; but finding themselves miserable and ungodly, guilty rebels, and in themselves damned criminals, how they themselves shall be justified with him, and be admitted to stand for ever in his presence. And as they can see no way in which these blessings can be obtained, but by a being held just through the obedience of another, and having salvation wrought in them in all its stages by the good Spirit of the Lord, they are made willing to submit to a salvation which is divinely sovereign, and absolutely independent of all creature co-operation, willing, or doing, whatever.

Nor ought this, their entire helplessness, their lying at the feet of Jesus in that helpless condition, and their earnest longings to be saved, independent of all works or endeavors of their own, to be offensive to those who have a power to will and do, or who can faithfully improve that power which God hath given to them, in his first motions upon their spirits. A poor wretched sinner like me, who can neither will nor do the good pleasure of God, who cannot improve the grace of God in any sense, who indeed can do nothing but sin, may be allowed to trust in absolute grace, without exciting the indignation of those good people who can and do fulfil conditions. If you think that you can be saved by fulfilling conditions, and if I am certain that I must be damned if my salvation depends in the least upon any the slightest conditions by me to be fulfilled, have not I as good a right to wish for salvation by grace alone, as you have to trust for a salvation partly by grace, and partly by works of righteousness of your own performing? If an hale and active Pharisee should happen to come past, where a poor unhappy traveller lay, by thieves plundered of his all, and so maimed and bruised that he can neither run nor walk, nor in the least move without help, would it not be prepos-

terous and absurd to upbraid the poor man for riding on the good Samaritan's horse? Let him, who can do what God is said to require as conditions of salvation, perform them all, and exert himself to the utmost; only let him not be offended with a poor sinner that can do nothing, for gladly receiving every office of kindness at the hand of the Friend of sinners!

There is yet another thing that we differ not a little in. Your main care seems to be about your fellow-creatures, lest it should be thought that the Almighty does not give to every man a fair chance for his life. You are even pleased to take the poor Pagans under your protection; as if the holy God did not know how to do that which is right concerning them, without the interference of Christians. I must freely confess to you, that when my wounds pain me most, and I feel my bruises most sensibly, that my first cares are about myself, what shall become of me: how I may glorify the Redeemer here, and enjoy him hereafter. As to the conduct of God towards the Pagan nations, and the rest of the unconverted world, it gives me no uneasiness: nor can I think that I am called to be his advocate any farther than he has made me his counsellor. One thing he hath indeed taught me, and that is, to know "that secret things belong unto the Lord:" and I rest perfectly satisfied, that our God, whose love, whose purposes are like himself, immutable, when he is called to Mr. Wesley's and Mr. Sellon's bar, will be able to justify all his proceedings; and that the arraignment of his decree as horrible, will not be numbered amongst your works of merit, by which you procure, (as Mr. Wesley says) the divine favor.

Having just mentioned the Pagan nations, I would observe concerning them, that although I dare not meddle with their eternal state, because I am unacquainted with it, I cannot well avoid taking notice of that invincible obstacle to their salvation, which the Rev. Mr. J. Wesley has thrown in the way. *Dialogue between a Predestinarian and his Friend*, p. 7. "As we are saved by faith alone, so unbelief is the "only damning sin." I am wont to think that every sin in its own nature is damning, because the scripture has denounced the curse against every breach of the moral law. But if

unbelief is a damning sin, and the only damning sin, the poor Pagans are in a deplorable situation, unless Mr. Wesley could indeed prove that they are believers. Either they are believers or unbelievers. If they are believers, they must have heard the gospel of Jesus: for how "shall they believe unless they have heard?" If they have not heard, then have they not faith, and so are under the power of unbelief, the only damning sin, and of course must all be damned, according to Mr. Wesley. Fie upon this want of charity; it is absolute Popery! This is no random dash of Mr. Wesley's pen; for he tells us in another tract,* that "those who perish, are damned for not believing in the only begotten Son of God; therefore he must have died for them, else they would be damned for not believing a lie." Admitting that Christ died for all the Pagans, and that the terms of salvation are believing and obeying; that hearing is requisite in order to believing, and that all are unbelievers who believe not, and as such must perish; the death of Christ, according to this wise man, leaves the poor Pagans in circumstances as deplorable as if he had not at all died for their redemption.

But I had almost forgot my leading design, which is to show you the harmony of your writings, and those of the Roman fathers, concerning the doctrine of election; and that although Mr. Coles' Practical Discourse on God's Sovereignty, is countenanced by scripture, and by the confessions of every Reformed Church, it hath not the least countenance from writers on your side of the question, either in the English or Romish Church; and that all the enemies of the Reformation were as violent enemies as you can be to absolute unconditional election.

The English Protestant reader cannot well avoid being agreeably struck, with the perfect agreement of your reasoning with that of the Papists, a specimen of which I purpose now to give him.

In *Predestination Calmly Considered*, page 23, Mr. Wesley says, "How shall God in justice judge the world, if there be

* Scripture Doctrine of Absolute Predestination, p. 13.

“ any decree of reprobation ? For what should those on the
 “ left hand be condemned ? For their having done evil ?
 “ They could not help it. There never was a time in which
 “ they could help it. Shall he then condemn them for what
 “ they could not help ? ” &c. &c.

His Grace, Cardinal Bellarmine, the Jesuit, is also of the same opinion, and condescendingly enough supposes, that “ if man had not free will, there would be no place left for “ reward or punishment : for if a man do evil of necessity, “ he deserveth no punishment ; and if he do well unwillingly, “ he is unworthy of reward.”* Mr. Wesley’s sense is one with the Cardinal, only not quite so explicit : we shall, therefore, make the one to explain the other. “ How shall God “ judge the world ? ” says Mr. Wesley ; “ Seeing there can be “ neither reward nor punishment,” says Cardinal Bellarmine. “ Those on the left hand never could help doing evil,” says Mr. Wesley. “ Doing evil of necessity,” says the Cardinal, “ they deserve no punishment for it.” So that never did two gamblers play into each other’s hands with more exactness, than does Cardinal Bellarmine and the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

To be sure, Elisha Coles was of opinion, that God might do what he would with his own, and might have proceeded with all men, upon an old covenant foundation, if he had seen meet, and so to have held the breakers of his laws eternally accursed. Elisha cannot see wherein there would any injustice have appeared, even if the first sentence against sin had been executed with the utmost rigor, without any promise of life having been at all given. Life is a gift ; and that can with no propriety be a gift, which cannot be righteously withheld, if meet unto the giver. Yet, if Mr. Wesley is to be believed, God could not have been just, without giving this life to every child of Adam ; so, at least, that all might have obtained it if they would. He says, “ But God might “ justly have passed by all men. Are you sure of that ? “ Where is it written ? I cannot find it in the word of God. “ Therefore, I reject it as a bold, precarious assertion, unsup-

* Willet’s Synop. p. 949.

“ported by holy scripture.” Then he makes his opponent to object to him, “But you know in your own conscience, “that he might justly have passed by you.” To which he himself answers, “I deny it.”* But for my own part, I very freely confess, that whatever injustice there might have been in God, in passing by the Rev. Mr. J. Wesley, there would have been none in passing by me.

God would have remained inviolably just, if I had never heard of his grace; notwithstanding this important clergyman has a claim thereunto; and daringly chargeth God with cruelty, on supposition that he had been passed by, and not chosen.

Nor can I see wherein the injustice of God would have appeared, had he even cut down rebellious and perfidious man, on his commencing sinner, and plunged him and all his posterity into that ruin, implied in the death threatened, without ever promising, or giving a Saviour. And so contracted has been my reading, or so treacherous my memory, that I do not recollect any one person, besides the Rev. Mr. Wesley, who considers God as having been bound in point of justice to do what he did in providing a Saviour. How important must that man be, whom God could not with justice have passed by! Strange doctrine indeed, to be inculcated in a Protestant nation, by a member of the established Church of England! And strangely deluded people, who crowd to hear a publisher of such blasphemy! I meet with nothing equal to this arrogance in the writings of even absurd Papists, though in every other respect their doctrines are precisely the same with your own, as the sequel will discover.

God created man in a pure and upright condition, perfectly able to fulfil that law he was pleased to give him, upon obedience to which his all depended. Man sinned, rebelled against his law-giver, and became liable to the penalty of the law. How could grace become necessary on God's part? Might not the law-giver, in the strictest justice, execute the sentence denounced, without impeachment at the creature's bar?

* Predestination Calmly Considered, p. 18.

As another instance of Mr. John Wesley's importance, and which sets his doctrine in a clear point of view, be pleased to peruse with me the following passage :* "Obedience is the cause of my election, love the cause of my obedience, faith the cause of my love, the gospel of my faith, Christ's death the cause of the gospel, God's love and pity the cause of Christ's death." From which uncommon strain of reasoning, this author not only gives the lie to Ephes. ii. 8. but convinceth us, that his dependence for acceptance is not upon the merit of Jesus, but upon his own faith, love, and obedience. Not but you, Gentlemen, have a right to depend upon your own obedience, seeing it is deemed so exalted : but if Mr. Wesley and Mr. Sellon are determined to plunge themselves into the ditch, it would be but candid in them, to permit poor sinners, whose righteousnesses are but as filthy rags, even in their own eyes, to place their dependence on the blood and righteousness of Jesus of Nazareth, that they may escape the ditch of destruction. Yet this must not be permitted, as appears from the instructions given to Mr. Wesley's missionaries, who as implicitly submit to his directions, as the Jesuits do to the general of their order. Be pleased to review the Minutes of the Conference of 1770, at Bristol. "Is not this salvation by works?"—*Ans.* "Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition." It seems that we are not quite ripe for embracing Mr. Wesley's doctrine of salvation by the merit of works, therefore it is glossed over with the word condition ; whereas it is clear from what follows, that it is the merit of works which is intended.

"What have we then been disputing about for thirty years past? I am afraid about words.—As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid, we are rewarded according to our works, yea, because of our works.† How

* Scripture Doctrine of Absolute Predestination, p. 6.

† The Minutes of the Conferences are not to be had for love nor money, by any person whatever of a different communion, not even by any of his own followers, except by the preachers, and some few who bear office among them. Does not this argue a consciousness of something being in view besides the promulgation of truth? Is truth ever ashamed to show her face before the public? Hidden works are rarely honest : yet Mr. Wesley thus addresseth his

“ does this differ from “ for the sake of our works ?” And “ how does this differ from *secundum merita operum*, as our “ works deserve ? Can you split this hair ? I doubt I can— “ not.—We are every hour and every moment pleasing or “ displeasing to God according to our works.”

Lay your hand upon your hearts, Gentlemen, and ask your own consciences, whether this be not the language of Anti-christ, and whether any missionary from Italy could better have expressed the sense of the Popish fathers ? Those infallible teachers insist on the necessity of good works, as joined with faith, to be the efficient causes of our salvation, which is precisely the same with what Mr. Wesley maintains when he tells us, that his obedience was the cause of his election. Bellarmine, the Jesuit, on justification, has this argument : “ Work out your own salvation with fear and “ trembling. Our light afflictions causeth unto us a more “ excellent weight of glory. *Ergo*, our works and sufferings “ are the cause of salvation,” of which you know that election is the first link, according to your own iron chain above referred to. So that if Mr. Shirley, Mr. Toplady, and others, were alarmed at your Minutes, you have abundantly compensated their pain, by revealing to which church you belong.

Mr. Sellon to the dead Elisha Coles, is extremely full of faith and obedience foreseen, as the ground of eternal election ; which brings to my mind a very pertinent argument used by his eminence the Jesuit, entirely to your purpose : “ Was not Abraham our father justified through his works ? “ Likewise was Rahab the harlot justified through works ? “ *Ergo*, we are justified by works.” It is true, the Cardinal does not split that hair, in distinguishing between the merit of works, and works as a condition ; that task was left for Mr. Wesley, who, notwithstanding, professeth that he cannot split it even. However, it is clear that both Bellarmine and you contradict the apostle Paul, who says expressly : “ That “ it is not of works, lest any man should boast ;” which the

preachers assembled in Conference : “ Count Zinzendorf loved to keep all “ things *close* ; I love to do all things openly.” Now, if he loves to do all things openly, let him assign a reason why the Minutes of Conference are kept such a profound secret ?

“ Words are but wind, 'tis actions shew the man.”

Rhemists thus explain : “ Not of works as thine of thyself “ being unto thee, but as those in which God hath made, “ formed, or created thee.” Which I suppose must mean, not those works performed under the influence of mere nature, but such as are performed by the aids of grace, as Mr. Sellon tells us :* “ Noah under the aids of grace set “ himself to walk with God ;” and so became elected and justified.

This gentleman farther tells us,† “ That contradiction in “ a Calvinist is no uncommon thing.” It was well for Mr. Sellon that Mr. Coles’ head was laid in the dust, before he presented him with so many challenges ; but I am able to prove from good and authentic testimony, that the Calvinists have not engrossed the sole right and practice of self-contradiction to themselves. I have shown that the Rev. Mr. John Wesley establisheth with Bellarmine, and the mother Church of Rome,‡ salvation by *works* ; but his note on Eph. ii. 9. absolutely gives the lie to his Minutes, and is downright Calvinism : “ Not of works.”——“ Neither this faith, nor “ this salvation is owing to any works you ever did, will, or “ can do.” So that it is plain he is subject to Calvinistic

* Page 56.

† Page 75.

‡ Within these few days I have been credibly informed, that since the late indulgence granted by government to the Papists, their chapels in Manchester, and other parts of Lancashire, have been very much crowded ; and what is very remarkable, numbers of Mr. Wesley’s followers in those parts flock to their assemblies. This attachment of the Wesleyans to the Popish worship, can arise from nothing but the *oneness* of the doctrine published in Mr. Wesley’s and in the Popish chapels.

As a specimen of the spirit of Lancashire Papists, I may relate a circumstance in which the author himself was personally concerned. Engaged on a certain time in a dispute with a Lancashire gentleman of the name of Slack, on the article of Transubstantiation, and having both scripture and reason on my side, found it no great difficulty to confute and confound the adversary ; which having done, the absurd doctrine of a breaden God, made by the baker and the parson, was held up in a ridiculous point of view, which so irritated the Papist, that he started up in a rage, and said, “ Sir, I should rejoice to see “ you, and all such heretics as you are, burned at a stake.” So saying, he flung himself out of the room, as if all the company had been none other than furies of the pit. So much for the spirit of Popery ; and which convinces me that the religion of Rome breathes still the same spirit of intolerance and persecution which sound policy will ever think it right to confine within due limits.

fits upon certain occasions. Yet, I must own, that it is not very easy to account for it, how the same man can tell us, "that his own obedience was the cause of his election;" and then to tell others, that no works which they ever did, will, or can do, can be the cause of their election and salvation, without supposing that he considers his own obedience as much more meritorious than that of other men.

Mr. Sellon, upon the article of Election, tells us, that, "Man (I suppose he means all men in general) is elected to eternal life, but upon condition only that he gives all diligence to make his calling and election sure." But how this is to be done, may be to some, in his sense of it, a very difficult inquiry; only as his friend Bellarmine has pointed out the way, namely, by good works. The Rhemish Annotators are very explicit in their note on this passage of 2 Pet. i. 10. to which the Jesuit alludes. They frankly tell us,* "That the certainty and effect of Predestination is procured by the free will and good works of man, and that our well-doing is a means for us to attain to the effect of God's Predestination, that is, say they, to life everlasting." Mr. Wesley in this, is as the echo to the Rhemish voice, for he tells us that the sense is, "An exhortation to us to be more diligent by courage, knowledge, temperance, &c. to make our calling and election firm."†

This brings to my remembrance the thirty-fourth Minute of Conference, 1770, where the chairman, after having reflected very seasonably, "that the Methodists are no better than other people," zealously interrogates his missionaries, "But why are we not more knowing?"—*Ans.* "Because we are idle; we forget the very first Rule (which I gave you.) Be diligent; never be unemployed a moment; never be triflingly employed," &c. which must be allowed upon all hands to be a very good rule, ill suited to the taste of church dignitaries. But the means of attaining knowledge must not be totally neglected, as it must needs be owned that Mr. Wesley's societies are sufficiently ignorant. "I desire that

* Rhem. in Loc.

† Wesley in Loc.

“the societies may provide the Christian Library* for the use of the minister.” Which is not only a very good way for promoting the sale of the books, but may probably incline some of the missionaries to seek after the originals.

I hope, Gentlemen, you will not think that here I write unfairly, in mentioning the name of missionaries, and the sale of books. In regard to the former, Mr. Wesley himself shall be my voucher:† “Why are we not all devoted to God, “breathing the whole spirit of the *missionaries*?” so that it is clear, that Gentleman glories in the name of missionary. To come at some knowledge of the whole spirit of the missionaries, it will be necessary to attend a little to the questions immediately following:—Q. “Do you rise at four? Do you fast once a week? Once a month? Do you know “the obligation or benefit of it? Do you recommend it to “others?”

In regard to the second, namely, mentioning the sale of the books written by Mr. Wesley, I may call on the same authority, Minute 37, p. 25. “It is the business of assistants “to take care that the societies be duly supplied with books, “and that the money for them be *constantly returned*. To “see that every society have a private room, and a set of the “library for the helper.”

“The societies are not half supplied with books through “the neglect of the assistant. Why should not each of you “do like William Pennington, carry books with you every “round?‡ Exert yourselves in this; be not ashamed.—Be “not weary.—Leave no stone unturned.—You have not “provided the library in every society;—for the want of this “many read trash.—Till this can be done, let there be

* The Christian Library consists of fifty volumes of Extracts from reputable authors, but in which, for the most part, they are made to speak the language of the Foundry.

† *Minutes*, p. 25. quest. 35.

‡ It seems William Pennington is not only a preacher to Mr. Wesley's mind, but is also a travelling bookseller; as the holy fathers, the sons of Loyola, are not only the professed ambassadors of Christ, but to suit the purposes of the congregation, *de propaganda fide*, are encouraged to carry on all manner of business.

“immediately in every place at least the Notes (or the Bible) and the Tract on Original Sin.”

Again, to show the excellency of Mr. Wesley’s writings above all others, mark p. 31. of the said Minutes : “Read the scriptures *with our notes*.” Perhaps you think it dangerous to read the scriptures without.* “Is it wise to read any till you have read our Tracts and Christian Library?” The sure way to keep them ignorant and teachable. It is somewhat unaccountable how the christian world subsisted before your tracts were written, seeing it is thought folly to read any other ; especially as some people think that Jesus Christ was not without witnesses, even before you arose as Masters in our British Israel.

Having thus let in a gleam of light upon your Arcanum, and classed you with your proper company, I take my leave ; and am,

REVEREND GENTLEMEN,

Your humble Servant.

* Why this injunction, if the scriptures are not dangerous, seeing Notes incomparably more valuable are abroad in the literary world ?

THE END.

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